

LETTER FROM HON. HENRY CLAY ON Emancipation in Kentucky.

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 17, 1840.

DEAR SIR: I have the pleasure to inform you that I have received your letter of the 12th inst. in relation to the subject of emancipation in Kentucky. I have been thinking much of late on this subject, and I have been much interested in the views of the friends of the cause in this country. I have been much interested in the views of the friends of the cause in this country. I have been much interested in the views of the friends of the cause in this country.

The question to which I allude is whether African Slavery, as it now exists in Kentucky, shall be left to a perpetual or indefinite continuance, or some provision shall be made in the new constitution for its gradual and ultimate extinction.

A few general observations will suffice my present purpose, without entering on the whole subject of Slavery, under all its bearings, and in every aspect of it. I am aware that there are respectable persons who believe that Slavery is a blessing, that the Institution ought to exist in every well organized society, and that it is even favorable to the preservation of liberty.

It is a question, however, whether the African race to Slavery, is sometimes derived from their alleged intellectual inferiority to the white race; but the argument is, in fact, as it may be, but which I shall not now examine, it would prove entirely too much.

It would prove that every white nation, which had made greater advances in civilization, knowledge and wisdom, than another white nation, would have a right to reduce the latter to a state of bondage. Nay, further, if the principle of subjugation founded upon intellectual superiority be true, and be applicable to races and to nations, who is to prevent its being applied to individuals? And then the wisest men in the world have a right to make slaves of all the rest of mankind!

If indeed, we possess this intellectual superiority, profoundly grateful and thankful to God who has bestowed it, we ought to fulfill all the duties and obligations which it imposes, and there would require us not to subjugate or deal unjustly with our fellow men who are less blessed than we are, but to instruct, to improve and to enlighten them.

A vast majority of the People of the United States, I believe, regard the introduction of Slavery into the Colonies, as a single slave trade, and not as a permanent institution. They regard the introduction of Slavery into the Colonies, as a single slave trade, and not as a permanent institution. They regard the introduction of Slavery into the Colonies, as a single slave trade, and not as a permanent institution.

Now, by the successful establishment of flourishing Colonies on the Western Coast of Africa, that difficulty has been removed. And I confess that, without indulging in any undue feelings of superstition, it does seem to me that it may have been among the dispensations of Providence to permit the wrongs under which Africa has suffered to be inflicted, that her children might be restored to their original home civilized and imbued with the benign spirit of Christianity, and prepared ultimately to redeem that great Continent from barbarism and idolatry.

Without undertaking to judge for any other State, it was my opinion in 1793, that Kentucky was in a state to admit of the gradual emancipation of her slaves; and how deeply do I lament that a system, with that object, had not been then established. If it had been, the State would now be free of slaves. My opinion has never changed, and I have frequently publicly expressed it. I should be most happy if what was impracticable at that epoch could be accomplished.

After full and deliberate consideration of the subject, it appears to me three principles should regulate the establishment of a system of gradual emancipation. The first is, that it should be slow in its operation, cautious, and gradual, so as to occasion no convulsion, nor any rash or sudden disturbance in the existing habits of society. Second, that as an indispensable condition, the emancipated Slaves should be removed from the State to some Colony.

And, thirdly, that the expenses of their transportation to such Colony, including an outfit for six months after their arrival, should be defrayed by a fund to be raised from the labor of such freed slaves.

Nothing could be more unwise than the immediate liberation of all the slaves in any State, comprehending both sexes and all ages, from that of tender infancy to extreme old age. It would lead to the most frightful and fatal consequences. Any great change in the condition of society should be marked by extreme care and circumspection. The introduction of slaves into the Colonies was an operation of years duration; and the work of their removal from the United States can only be effected after the lapse of a great length of time.

I think that a period should be fixed when all born after it should be free at a specific age. I would suggest should be 1855, or even 1860; for on this and other arrangements of the system, if adopted, I believe to a liberal margin, so as to obviate any many objections, and to insure as many opinions as possible. Whether the commencement of the operation of the system be a little earlier or later, is not so important as that it should be permanently fixed, from which we could look forward with confidence, to the final termination of Slavery within the limits of the Commonwealth.

Whatever may be the day fixed, whether 1855 or 1860, or any other day, all born after it, I suggest, should be free at the age of twenty-five, the age when they are considered to be self-sufficient, and to be able to support themselves. I am, Sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant, H. CLAY.

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William B. Preston, Secretary of the Navy, is comparatively a young man, and new to public life. He was chosen to Congress two years ago from a District which had given Polk a handsome majority, and which had never till then been Whig. He is a lawyer of good talents—popular but not distinguished in the House; and is a nephew of Wm. C. Preston, the late eminent Senator from South Carolina.

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Reverly Johnson, Attorney General, is a man whose ability is instantly and universally conceded. He has been a lawyer of much note in Maryland, and U. S. Senator from that State for four years past. As a politician, though always reckoned a Whig, he has been somewhat erratic in his course, and is probably the most ultra Southern man in the Cabinet.

Of Jacob Collier, Postmaster General, the Boston Recorder speaks as follows: "We find in the American Review for February a fine portrait of this gentleman, a member of Congress from Vermont, and formerly one of the Justices of the Supreme Court of that State. From a short and well written review of Judge Collier's life and public services, we make a few extracts. The writer in the Review, referring to the judicial character of Judge Collier, says:—

"As a judicial officer, he was able, industrious and courteous, and discharged the duties of his office with the most perfect fidelity. He was a laborious writer, to the general acceptance of the legal profession, and his name was a guarantee of the soundness of his opinions as a member of Congress, he says:—

"In regard to Judge Collier's position as a member of the House of Representatives, we say with truth that it is even higher than public opinion has ascribed to him. He was a man of great energy and high domestic history, the writer closes his article by saying:—

"Judge Collier has been an exemplary as his public career has been honorable, his integrity as a man has never been assailed, and his life in all its relations has attracted the sincere admiration of his countrymen. He